

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS SHUM, AR, MMOL
SUBJECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND US PROGRAMS IN ARGENTINA

REF: STATE 162533

1. I READ STATE 162533 WITH DEEP CONCERN. DUE TO A SEEMING LACK OF CLARITY ON THE EXACT NATURE OF THE MESSAGE TO BE CONVEYED TO GOA, I FELT IT WISE TO BE PRUDENT AND CAUTIOUS ON MY APPROACH TO GENERAL VIOLA. MY MESSAGE TO GOA, IF IT FOLLOWED EXACTLY THE WORDING OF THE CONTENTS OF STATE REFTEL COULD POSSIBLY EVEN BE INTERPRETED AS A DESIRE FOR COMPLETE SEVERANCE IN RELATIONS.

2. I MET WITH GENERAL VIOLA AT 11:45 THIS MORNING IN HIS OFFICE. I HAVE FRIENDLY WORKING RELATIONS WITH VIOLA, AS WELL AS PRESIDENT VIDELA, SO I COULD DISPENSE WITH THE USUAL NICETIES OF DISCUSSING WEATHER, WORLD CUP, ETC. I TOLD VIOLA THAT I WAS THE BEARER OF BAD TIDINGS, BUT I BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS STILL ROOM TO SAVE THE DAY.

3. I TOOK OUT MY HAND-WRITTEN NOTES, IN ORDER TO BE SURE I WAS NOT OMITTING ANY OF THE SALIENT POINTS IN REFTEL. I ADVISED VIOLA THAT THE USG WAS DISAPPOINTED IN THE CONDITIONAL INVITATION THE GOA EXTENDED TO IAHR.

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I SAID THAT THE IAHR HAS NOT TO THIS DATE ACCEPTED THE GOA INVITATION.

4. I FURTHER TOLD VIOLA THAT RELEASES OF DETAINEES WAS NOT MOVING AS PER EXPECTATIONS. I REMINDED HIM OF MY LAST CONVERSATION WITH HIM ON LACK OF ORGANIZATION IN THE

HANDLING OF THE RIGHT OF OPTION CASES.

5. VIOLA IS USUAL PLACID, SMILING AND FRIENDLY MILITARY COMMANDER. BY THIS TIME, HE LOOKED LIKE A GHOST AND HIS LIPS WERE QUIVERING. HE MANAGED TO TELL ME THAT HE DIDN'T THINK THE USG WOULD BE EXPECTING SUBSTANTIAL RESULTS IN SUCH A SHORT TIME -- REFERRING TO NEWSOM VISIT. HAVING DIFFICULTY IN SPEAKING, HE MUMBLED THE WORLD CUP HAD SAPPED ALL OF ARGENTINA OF ITS ENERGY AND GOA HAD ALMOST COME TO A COMPLETE STOP FOR A MONTH. HE SAID HE FELT THE USG WAS BEING SOMEWHAT INCONSIDERATE.

6. I INTERRUPTED GENERAL VIOLA AND SAID THAT I HAD EVEN WORSE NEWS FOR HIM. I SAID BECAUSE OF A NON-ACCEPTANCE BY THE IAHRC OF THE CONDITIONAL GOA INVITATION, NO MILITARY TRAINING WAS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE. I ADDED THAT EXIM BANK, ON FOREIGN POLICY GROUNDS, WOULD BE TOLD NOT TO CONSIDER ARGENTINE FINANCING, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE YACYRETA HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT. I EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT THE BOEING AIRCRAFT ALSO COULD NOT BE FINANCED BY EXIM BANK, BUT THE USG HAD NO OBJECTION IF THE GOA COULD GET PRIVATE FINANCING.

7. BY THIS TIME VIOLA WAS SPEECHLESS. HE STARED AT ME AS IF THOUGH THE RUG HAD BEEN PULLED OUT UNDER HIM. HE HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD ME THAT MILITARY TRAINING WAS THE KEY GOA
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REQUEST. SENSING HIS FRUSTRATION, I INFORMED HIM THAT I WAS GOING TO WASHINGTON ON JULY 9. I SUGGESTED THAT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM AGAIN BEFORE MY DEPARTURE. I ALSO EXPLAINED I FELT BOUND TO DISCUSS THE ENTIRE SUBJECT WITH THE FONMIN. I ALSO SUGGESTED THAT SINCE MONTES WAS JUST RETURNING FROM WASHINGTON TODAY AND WOULD BE TOO TIRED TO SEE ME NOW, AND PERHAPS ALSO DISAPPOINTED WITH HIS EFFORTS. I SAID I WANTED TO SEE THE FONMIN WHEN CONDITIONS WERE RIGHT AND I WOULD DEPEND ON HIM TO SO INFORM ME.

8. VIOLA TO COPIOUS NOTES. HE SAID HE WOULD SEE PRESIDENT VIDELA AND REVIEW THE WHOLE SUBJECT WITH HIM. I SUGGESTED TO VIOLA THAT THIS WHOLE MATTER SHOULD BE TREATED WITH THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER MILITARY COMMANDERS IN A LOW KEY. I FELT SUDDEN OUTBURSTS AGAINST THE USG OR RECRIMINATORY ACTS MIGHT TEND TO PRECIPITATE FURTHER DISRUPTION OF RELATIONS. I SAID I FELT THERE WAS STILL ROOM FOR FLEXIBILITY. I EMPHASIZED WE CHERISHED THEIR FRIENDSHIP.

9. I REQUESTED VIOLA, IF HE COULD, TO PLEASE INFORM ME ON THE PRESIDENTS REACTION. I ALSO OFFERED TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT, VIOLA AND FONMIN AND OTHERS BEFORE I LEFT FOR

WASHINGTON AND CONVEY WHATEVER MESSAGE THEY DESIRED.
I ENCOURAGED GENERAL VIOLA TO DO WHATEVER THEY COULD TO BRING
ABOUT A BROADENING OF THEIR
INVITATION TO IAHC, AS HAS BEEN DONE BY OTHER LA
COUNTRIES.

10. ON MY RETURN FROM VIOLA'S OFFICE, I LEARNED OF FRANK
MCNEILS TELCON WITH JACK HIGGINS. I FULLY SHARE MCNEILS
VIEWS AS OUTLINED TO ME BY THE ADCM.

COMMENT: ARGENTINA'S WORLD CUP VICTORY HAS TENDED TO
INSTILL IN SOME KEY GOA LEADERS A FEELING THAT THEY ARE
WORLD BEATERS NOW IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE. SOME HAVE BEGUN
SAYING PUBLICLY THAT A HERDER LINE MUST BE TAKEN NOW IN
GOA'S FOREIGN POLICY. ONE GETS THE FEELING THAT THE MORE
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MILITANT ARGENTINES ARE SUDDENLY ANXIOUS TO WALK ACROSS THE
ANDES AND TAKE OVER CHILE. AT THIS MOMENT, WE ALL HAVE TO
BE CAREFUL NOT TO GIVE THE MILITANTS REASON TO ENCOURAGE ANTI-US
OUTBURSTS. I BELIEVE I SUCCEEDED IN CONVINCING VIOLA OF
THE NEED NOT TO MAKE ANY PUBLIC DECLARATIONS AT THIS MOMENT.
I'M HOPEFUL THAT I ALSO IMPRESSED HIM OF NEED TO PASS ON
ONLY LOW-KEY INFORMATION TO HIS SUBORDINATES. I SUGGESTED
NOW IS NO TIME TO MAKE STATEMENTS THAT MIGHT LATER BE
REGRETTED. I BELIEVE WE BOTH FELT THAT US/GOA RELATIONS
ARE TOO IMPORTANT AND EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT MUST BE MADE
TO PRESERVE THEM AND EVEN IMPROVE THEM.
GENERAL VIOLA WAS DEEPLY PAINED BY THE MESSAGE FROM
WASHINGTON. I HAVE A STRONG FEELING PRESIDENT VIDELA
WILL ALSO GO THROUGH AGONIZING MOMENTS. THEY SINCERELY
FEEL THEY ARE THE DEFENDERS OF A FREE WORLD BY DEFEATING
TERRORISM AND THAT THE USG IS NOT GIVING THEM ENOUGH TIME
TO MOVE IN POLITICALLY DANGEROUS AREAS.
I SHALL ENCOURAGE A FOLLOW-UP WITH VIDELA AND VIOLA ASAP,
ASSUMING THEY WILL RECEIVE ME. THEIR FUTURE ATTITUDE TOWARD
THE EMBASSY MAY BE SOMEWHAT COOL.
CASTRO

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